

# HISD PRESS RELEASE

## HISD Board of Education elects officers for 2021-2022

*Board selects Trustee Patricia Allen (District IV) as its new president*

Jan. 21, 2021 — The Houston Independent School District Board of Education elected officers for the 2021-2022 school year during a special meeting this morning.

Trustee Patricia Allen, a former principal and long-time educator who worked for HISD for 35 years, was elected president.

“I gratefully accept the honor of being elected to this position, and I thank my colleagues for selecting me,” Allen said. “I want to assure my fellow trustees and Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan that I will endeavor to do everything in my power to faithfully serve the children, teachers, parents and staff of this district.”

The new officers are:

### **President – Patricia Allen (District IV)**

Patricia K. Allen is a third-generation career educator who retired in 2015 after working for HISD for 35 years, most recently as principal of MacGregor Elementary School. Under her guidance, the school earned a “Met Standard” rating from the state and five of six state distinctions. Previously, she worked as an HISD magnet coordinator, teacher trainer, and classroom teacher at MacGregor, Thompson, and Lockhart elementary schools. At MacGregor, Allen began and/or fostered relationships with several business partners including the Houston Rockets, PricewaterhouseCoopers, First Presbyterian Church, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Recipe for Success. Allen is a graduate of Madison High School. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from the University of Houston as well as a master’s degree in Education and a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction.

### **First Vice President – Holly Maria Flynn Vilaseca (District VI)**

Holly Maria Flynn Vilaseca was elected to a four-year term in November 2017 after being appointed to the position earlier that year to fill an unexpired term. She grew up in rural Ohio and attended public schools there. She is the daughter of a Colombian immigrant and is the first in her family to go to college, earning bachelor’s degrees in Latin American and Caribbean studies, and in Sports Management and Communications from the University of Michigan. She has a master’s degree in Social-Organizational Psychology from Columbia University. Flynn Vilaseca became a Teach for America corps member and began teaching in 2004 at HISD’s Windsor Village Elementary School. She also worked at Battelle for Kids, K12 Inc., and

thinkLaw. Flynn Vilaseca has served on the City of Houston Mayor's Hispanic Advisory Board. She and her husband have a son.

**Second Vice President – Judith Cruz (District VIII)**

Judith Cruz is a native Texan and longtime Houston resident. Her mother is from Guatemala and she grew up in a bilingual, Spanish-speaking home. Cruz received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Latin American Studies from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Arts degree in Curriculum and Instruction, Bilingual Special Education from George Washington University. Cruz has over 20 years of experience as an educator and volunteer in public schools. She taught at Lee High School (now Wisdom) in HISD and was part of the team that created Liberty High School where she was a founding teacher. Cruz is a Teach for America alumna and has served on the Superintendent's Parent Advisory Committee. She co-founded and was president of the parent/teacher association at Lantrip Elementary. Most recently, Cruz worked at DiscoverU. She resides with her husband and three sons who attend HISD schools.

**Secretary – Kathy Blueford-Daniels (District II)**

Kathy Blueford-Daniels is a lifelong Houstonian who attended HISD's Dogan Elementary, Fleming Middle and Wheatley High schools. She studied nursing at Houston Community College, and accounting/bookkeeping at Massey Business College before beginning a 28-year career with the U.S. Postal Service. She retired then became the community liaison for state Sen. Borris L. Miles. She founded Black, Latino, Asian, Caucasian Mourners of Murder (BLAC MoM) to serve as a support group after the 2006 slaying of her 20-year-old son in a case of mistaken identity. She organized "Young Soldiers Marching for Christ," establishing youth and young-adult drill teams to take a stand against violence and to encourage self-discipline and positive engagement. Blueford-Daniels is married and has one daughter, three grandchildren, and a blended family including a stepdaughter, stepson, and three grandchildren.

**Assistant Secretary – Daniela "Dani" Hernandez (District III)**

Daniela "Dani" Hernandez is a native of Houston's East End and attended HISD schools. She is the daughter of immigrants, and a first-generation graduate from both high school and college. After earning her bachelor's degree in Sociology from Boston University in 2011, she returned to Houston to become a bilingual teacher at the elementary school she attended. Hernandez earned a master's degree in Educational Leadership from the University of St. Thomas. She then worked as an administrator in HISD for six years before becoming a real-estate agent with Keller-Williams. Hernandez is a community advocate for eliminating educational inequities and closing the achievement gap between children from different socioeconomic backgrounds. She believes all students must be held to high expectations, so they can graduate ready for college, career, or military service, and have the best possible opportunity to succeed in life.

For more information, please visit the HISD Board of Education's webpage <https://www.houstonisd.org/domain/7897>

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The Houston Independent School District is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States, with 280 schools and more than 209,772 students. The 333-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area, with more than 27,000 employees.

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